6: Sauer G-5 (1785-94) 1802 Yakut
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[RCH: for account of the decrease in wealth among the Yakut, see catagory 178, pp. 112-113.]

6: Sauer--114 G-5 (1785-94) 1802 Yakut
116, 556

"Of the first huts about the river Newya, near Olekma, and all along the river Lena to its estuary, the inhabitants are in indigent circumstances; as are also those of the Ochot, Amicon, Momo, Indigirka, Alasey, Kovima, and Jana, who select such plains as afford food for their cattle; while the mountains are the places of resort of the Tungoose. The Yakuti that inhabit the Vilui, Aldan, Ud, and all the intervening plains, are immensely rich in cattle."

6: Sauer--114 [2] G-5 (1785-94) 1802 Yakut
116, 141, 178, 511, 556

"There is perhaps no nation in the world that can exhibit a greater variety with regard to size. The affluent, whose dwellings are situated about the meadows on the south side of the Virchoyanski chain, are from five feet ten inches to six feet four inches high, well proportioned, extremely strong, and very active; while the indigent inhabitants of the more northern parts are in general below the middle size, indolent, and of an unhealthy complexion, evidently stunted by the badness of their food, the severity of the climate, and the want of proper cloathing. Their wealth consists in horses and horned cattle: The private property of no individual at this instant exceeds 2000, all species included; formerly, numbers of them possessed 20,000, according to their own testimony..."

6: Sauer--125 [3] G-5 (1785-94) 1802 Yakut
116, 551, 556, 768, 776

"The rich are esteemed to be under the protection of the gods; but the poor are rejected as forsaken, and only protected by their relations, or obliged to hire themselves out to work. Every Yakut bears two names, and is never called by the right, except in cases of necessity; thus they think they evade the search of the evil spirits bent on tormenting them. They never mention the dead, except allegorically, and leave the hut to ruins wherin any one has expired, thinking it the habitation of demons."

7: Shklovsky -- 58[2] T-3 (1891-92) 1916 Yakut
116, 556, 585

"The wedding feast lasted for three days. Such feasts cost a Yakut half his fortune, but he would be considered disgracefully mean were he not to provide it."

9: Stadling--89-90 E-3 (1898) 1901 Yakut
116, 178, 231, 422, 556

"The Yakuts are generally poor. Their principal possessions consist of cattle and horses. The Yakut horses are small and shaggy, but very hardy, strong, and good-tempered animals. Throughout the long and terrible winter they subsist on the grass underneath the snow, which, like the reindeer, they remove with their feet, the strongest [90] horses going in front, and the weaker ones following them, eating the uncovered grass. The Yakuts, like other Tatar peoples, are very fond of horse-meat, and from the horses' milk they prepare the well-known kumiss. The number of horses they own, however, is diminishing, and only well-to-do Yakuts as a rule now keep them, the great majority having cattle instead. (1)

1. In former times the Yakuts regarded cattle as unclean animals, but little by little utility has conquered superstition, so that the cow has now to a great extent replaced the horse both as a yielder of milk and meat, and also as a beast of burden."

15: Popov --260 E-3 (no date) 1933 Yakut
116, 326, 539, 556, 756

"Among the Yakut, blacksmiths as well as shamans usually are not rich. This gave rise to the following tale:

'Long ago God asked a blacksmith, a shaman and a merchant: 'What are your profits?' The shaman and the blacksmith lied and said they made hardly anything. The merchant spoke the truth. Then God said that as a punishment for lying the shaman and the blacksmith should never become rich.'"

17: Erman--257 N-3 (1828-29)1850 Yakut
116, 226, 556, 437

"In Kantinsk, seventy-seven versts from Peskovsk, and in the following stages, the Russian population is mixed with more than an equal proportion of Yakuts. These are far more successful fishers and hunters than the Russians, and we were always sure of finding in their yurts a good stock of carp and other fish. Many of them have grown rich by barter, while the Russians here, by their own confession, find a miserable subsistence."

19: Kharuzin -- 61 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut -1-2
116, 423, 556, 651, 686

But with regard to meadows, whose significance for the Yakut community, thanks to the cattle raising economy, is extremely great, the Yakuts, under the influence of the system for levying taxes, have elaborated other, more accurate modes of utilization than those based on occupation. With regard to the sharing of meadow sites among the Yakuts of the district studied by Mr. Pripuzov, a system of divisions has been established which are made on the basis of social contracts for 10 years and more. Fixed terms for the divisions apparently do not exist. The meadows are customarily divided into three categories, with corresponding taxes [RCH: presumably taxes paid to the Russian government] and obligations imposed on the separate families. The most powerful households have meadow lands of the first category--40 cart loads; the second category, assigned to the well-to-do, gives 20 cart loads; and finally the third category, for the poor, gives 10 cart loads. Only those who have meadow lands of the 1st category can be elected elders. The community vigilantly guards after the punctual payment and fulfillment of his obligations by each Yakut; for the performance of the latter, it is permitted to hire another person. In the case of defaulting payers of taxes the community takes away their section of meadow land or part of it and rents it out to cover the arrears. (1)

1. Mr. Pripuzov makes mention of rather interesting information concerning local measurements among the Yakuts. Although the Yakuts are generally acquainted with Russian measurements, they make simultaneously use of

19: Kharuzin --61 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut-2
116, 423, 556, 651, 686

their own. Thus, the circumference of a haystack is given in terms of sagenes-bylas; the hides of larger animals are measured in soles-ullugakh; small objects (bridles, axes, etc.) are measured by the spread of the hand-tu-tum; or by the distance between the thumb and middle finger-kharys. The thickness of fat on meat is measured in fingers-ili. The length of a road is defined by a unit which is equal to about 10 versts- kyos (a word which, according to Mr. Pripuzov, is equivalent to: "to travel or to move from one place to another with cattle and household utensils"), or by a day's march- kundyuk. Finally, the time of the day is designated in accordance with the nomad cattle-breeder's way of life, as the time of milking the cows and mares; a smaller unit of time is that required to cook a meal- uyos-bystyna.

[RCH: This footnote has been reproduced in the files under separate categories; see category 804, p. 61 this source]

38: Dobell--38 G-2 (1812-13) 1830 Yakut
116, 511, 464, 556

"The population of the province of Yakutsk is upwards of one hundred thousand souls, between eighty and ninety thousand of whom are Yakuts, and many of them were extremely rich; but now there are few large proprietors. Indeed there is actually amongst them a very large proportion of poor, who, if it were not for the employment they find amongst the Russians, and the great cheapness of living, would be reduced to beggary."

38: Dobell--38-39 G-2 (1812-13) 1830 Yakut
116, 114, 431, 556, 651, 661

"The chiefs and head men are very fond of making presents to the Chief and other officers of Government, because it is for them a very profitable business. When a present is made, a collection takes place from all the Yakuts of the Ouloos; and I have been assured the Prince generally collects at least twice the [39] amount of the present, taking care to put the surplus in his own pocket. This, and low wages together, have reduced the poorer class of Yakuts to a state of slavery; for, as they cannot pay their debts, they are obliged to serve those hard masters on their own terms. The tribes of Yakuts being now nearly all Christians and civilised, they ought to be put on the same footing with Russians, which would tend in a great measure to do away with a number of the abuses actually existing. Above all, measures should be adopted to abolish venality and peculation: that course seems necessary as well for the preservation as the prosperity of Siberia. The privileged classes should not be suffered to trade without taking out a license, which is actually the case, and whereby the merchant is injured, who pays the crown, and has to strive against an unfair competition."

38: Dobell--43 [3] G-2 (1812-13) 1830 Yakut
116, 181, 556, 622, 692

"In general they are great talkers, and too much disposed to litigation. To gratify this passion, they have obtained permission from the Government of Irkutsk to have what is called in Russian a doom, or petty court of justice of their own, where their golovoi, or head man, with some of the princes, presides to decide the quarrels and disputes which occur amongst them. As the doom is at Yakutsk, of course the golovoi and the princes who preside, are obliged to live there, at a great expense; and this expense is paid by the Oulooses in general: they also receive handsome salaries. Here, then, is another plan of enriching the rich and impoverishing the poor; for I have been confidently informed that it has produced no good whatever; on the contrary, the Yakuts are constantly dissatisfied with the decisions and almost invariably refer their causes to the Russian tribunals for a final settlement."

44: Gilder -- 332 J-2 (1882) 1883 Yakut
116, 252, 262, 264, 342, 556

"The country here [RCH: between the Aldan River and Yakutsk] is more thickly peopled than further north, but the houses are of the same construction--logs notched into each other at the corners and a flat roof of logs closely laid and covered with a thick layer of turf. The whole outside of the structure is afterward smeared with manure. The rich Yakouts live just like the poor ones-- the same kind of houses, one little end reserved for the family, and the other filled with cows and calves. At the season I passed through this country these people live entirely upon milk, rich and poor, alike. The milk is boiled with the inner bark of the pine tree, pounded first to break the fibres. Sometimes this dish is improved with a gallon or two of minnows, caught in traps that are set for the purpose in every lake and stream. I have eaten of this dish with these people in the fashionable style--that is, each male is provided with a large wooden spoon, and the pot is set in the middle of the table, so that every one can fish for himself. When one is hungry it is a very palatable dish, but I cannot understand how great, strong men can be satisfied to subsist on milk when they have an abundance of cattle. Perhaps it is this milk diet that makes such cowards of these people."

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Women's chestpiece embroidered with colored beads.

of tales called ustuoruya (from the Russian word "istoriya" or history), in which the heroes were Russian merchants, poor state-owned peasants, Ivan Tsarevich and other characters from Russian fairytales. Their plots are also close to those of the Russian tales. The historical legends tell of journeys to strange countries and the unusual adventures involved. Some of them are close in content to the legends of the Olenek Khosun epic.

Both in theme and in method of narration, the epic tales were very close to the Yakut olonkho and were even called by the same name. They often describe a way of life alien to the Dolgans; they mention horses and cows, but hardly ever mention reindeer. Their theme is the struggle between heroes and persons consorting with evil spirits. The dialogues, just as in the Yakut epic tales, were sung. Dolgan songs are either short (lyrical) or long. The former were not performed by professionals, and the composers and performers were usually boys and girls. The long songs were performed by highly gifted improvisers or "songsters," who were relatively few and far between.

The storytellers were regarded as the elite, chosen by the good deities and spirits. Gifted storytellers created their own schools and whole generations of young storytellers studied under them. According to the old beliefs of the Dolgans, all the images drawn by the storytellers could be turned into visible images or shadows. This belief in the ability of the storyteller to re-create real images by his words was exploited by the Dolgan shamans to make their methods of "curing" the sick more convincing. Sometimes, to determine which spirit the disease had come from, the shaman would send for a storyteller. The latter would begin telling an epic tale as dusk fell. As soon as the hero of the tale began to gain the upper hand over his adversary, the spirit which had allegedly been eating the patient began to emerge to help his brother spirit. As soon as he saw the evil spirit and knew what kind it was, the shaman cast a spell, now knowing what he had to do to cure the sick person. During heavy epidemics shamans often resorted to the help of the storytellers by asking them to spend evenings telling stories in which all the adventures of the heroes had a happy ending. Since it was considered that the images in the epic tales became visible, in the spring, when the geese arrived, no stories were recounted so that the images would not frighten the geese. To avoid frightening wild deer, stories were not told on the eve of the hunt.

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The Dolgans had no musical instruments. It was only at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries that the Yakut jew's-harp began to